

**COST OF GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES
“Hybrid-Remote” Via BlueJeans Videoconference
and
In-Person, Mayor’s Conference Room, 9th Floor, Kalana O Maui Building
February 9, 2023**

PRESENT: Michael Williams, Chair
Evan Dust, Member
Paula Heiskell, Member
Spencer Lau, Member
Lu Ann Lankford-Faborito, Member
Sarah Simmons, Member
Poerava Tehiva, Member

EXCUSED: Daniel O’Brien, Vice Chair

STAFF: Caleb Rowe, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Shelley Pellegrino, Technical Writer for the Commission
Lance Taguchi, County Auditor
Robin Arita-Chang, Office of the County Auditor

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Chair Williams took roll. Commissioners Dust, Heiskell, Lau, Lankford-Faborito, Tehiva, and Chair Williams were present. Vice-Chair Daniel O’Brien was excused. There is one vacancy. All commissioners appeared remotely via BlueJeans.

III. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

There was no public testimony.

IV. REVIEW CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

There was no correspondence received.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVE [JANUARY 12, 2023 DRAFT COMMISSION MINUTES](#)

Commissioner Dust moved to approve the January 12, 2023 meeting minutes, and Commissioner Heiskell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The Commission approved the minutes unanimously (7-0; one excused; one vacancy).

VI. COUNTY AUDITOR’S UPDATE

County Auditor Lance Taguchi stated that he did not have an update to provide.

VII. UPDATE ON COST OF GOVERNMENT COMMISSION TURNOVER

Chair Williams stated that four commissioners will end their terms at the end of March, with only Commissioner Dust eligible for reappointment. Chair Williams expressed his concern about whether the appointment process would be completed prior to the Commission's April meeting and the risk that there might not be a quorum for that meeting.

County Auditor Lance Taguchi asked whether anyone from the Mayor's Office was attending the meeting. Deputy Corporation Counsel Caleb Rowe responded that he thought Zeke Kalua was the responsible from the Mayor's Office. Mr. Taguchi explained that he would contact the Mayor's Office to determine who was assigned to serve as the ex-officio member. Commissioner Dust added that there has been a request from the Chair of the Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency (GREAT) Committee to see if other committee chairs were willing to give up their time during the first week of committee meetings so that the GREAT Committee could meet in extended sessions to consider all of the nominations for department directors and commission members.

Chair Williams stated that he sent a letter to Mayor Bissen alerting him to the situation. He also stated that because the Commission has had a vacant position for about eight months, the Council was entitled to nominate a commissioner to that position, though the term would expire at the end of March 2023.

VIII. DISCUSS PROCUREMENT OF TECHNICAL WRITER SERVICES

Mr. Taguchi stated that the Commission is on the last option year of its current contract with the technical writer, which will expire at the end of July 2023. He added that if the COGC wants to continue using a technical writer, then he will move forward with drafting a request for proposals (RFP). He recommended a one-year contract with an option to continue annually for three or four years.

Commissioner Lankford-Faborito moved to direct the Auditor to continue with the procurement process, and Commissioner Heiskell seconded the motion.

During discussion, Commissioner Dust asked whether a draft RFP would be available for the Commission to review. Mr. Taguchi responded that he would try to have a draft available for the March meeting just in case there is no quorum for the April meeting. Mr. Taguchi also asked whether the Commission had a target dollar amount in mind for the contract. The current contract is \$33,600. The RFP is based upon actual hours spent.

Commissioner Dust asked the Commission to consider that it mirror the recommendation that was made to the Auditor for the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, and requested an additional 10%. Commissioner Lankford-Faborito suggested \$40,000. Chair Williams asked Mr. Taguchi to include \$40,000 in the draft RFP for consideration at the March meeting. Mr. Dust added that he would support the figure as well.

There was no further vote taken.

IX. DISCUSS COUNTY ROAD SAFETY TIG TERMINATION DATE (COMMISSIONERS DUST AND HEISKELL)

There was no public testimony.

Commissioner Dust moved that the termination date be moved from April 2023 to July 2023, and Commissioner Heiskell seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0 (one excused; one vacancy).

X. UPDATE ON NON-TIG INVESTIGATIONS

A. Visitor Accommodations — Policy Options for Management (Chair Williams)

There was no public testimony.

Chair Williams stated that he has more material to add to his report. He stated that he obtained some information about the push for a second runway, which would increase the number of visitors to the island, as well as a discussion between Hawaiian Airlines and Mokulele Airlines to use seaplanes for interisland flights and their use of the harbor rather than the airport.

Chair Williams stated that he now has an analysis on how many bedrooms are available for visitors in Maui County, which include second homes, and he will include this information in his report.

Regarding the second runway, Chair Dust commented that more runway does not necessarily result in more lift, and that the proposed expansion could also be related to increased safety. He added that the capacity of an airport is determined more by the number of gates to embark and disembark passengers and the capacity for passengers to move through the airport (such as ticketing, TSA, and holding areas at the gates).

Chair Williams pointed out that if Hawaiian Airlines moved to seaplanes for interisland travel, then it would provide more opportunity for additional overseas flights at the airport.

Commissioner Dust also noted that he recently saw a comment from a columnist that it was cheaper to make daily flights from Oahu to Maui to attend a conference than to pay for accommodations on Maui. He stated that he heard that accommodations at the Seaside Hotel in Kahului was upwards of \$600 per night.

B. County Real Property Tax Policies

Chair Williams stated that he is trying to draft an addendum to the report dealing with agricultural land use valuation. He noted that based on discussions with Marcy Martin from the Real Property Tax Division, there are very few “fake farms” that are receiving the tax break for genuine agricultural operations. They do not yet have a good system to try to determine what ag value is; some farm operations receive a 99% discount of the market value of the property, while others receive 80%. There is no consistent objective determination. In addition, there are 14 vacancies in the Real Property Assessment Division staff.

Chair Williams added that he is interested in learning whether Mayor Bissen and the Council will use the Commission’s Real Property Tax Report as a resource during budget deliberations.

C. County of Maui Capital Project Delivery Process (Commissioner Dust)

Commissioner Dust stated that he is just starting work on the investigation. He plans to draft a letter to the Managing Director requesting information on all County departments that have capital project management responsibilities. He will then create a survey to send to department directors assessing what techniques they use to manage capital projects.

XI. DISCUSS POTENTIAL TOPICS TO REVIEW AND POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF TEMPORARY INVESTIGATIVE GROUPS (TIGS)

- [Summary of Cost of Government Commission Investigations and Reports \(2009–Present\)](#)

Ms. Pellegrino stated that she updates the summary of COGC investigations document every month as a resource for commissioners and the public.

XII. DETERMINE NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2023.

Commissioner Lankford-Faborito asked when the Commission would elect a new chair for the 2023–2024 term. Chair Williams indicated that Commission might want to wait until the April meeting, which would include the newly-appointed commissioners.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.